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new masses

MAY 6, 1947 • 15¢ • IN CANADA 20¢

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just a minute

"WHO WILL BUY MY HANDS?" is the title of our May Day cover drawing, a lithograph by Ted Kraynik. Writing to us from his home in Milwaukee, the artist says:

"I had wanted for a long time to do something which would reflect the spirit of my father and others like him. He had participated in the early proletarian movement in Hungary, and like so many other immigrants, had brought with him to America the vision and spirit and desire for a new and better world.

"Although crushed physically by the lecherous demands of a system of private profit which feeds upon the sinews, sweat and blood of people who must toil, he never lost the dignity and self-respect those men have who know that the world is rightfully theirs—built with their hands.

"He toiled in the dark pits, digging the black gold which makes the wheels of industry turn. Later he poured the steel and shaped it to make the wheels themselves.

"To me his hands were always a symbol of that great strength and quiet dignity which the salt of the earth possess. To me they symbolize the self-sacrifice and devotion which such as he give to their loved ones with unstinting devotion. They are the heritage as well as a symbol.

"Hands created man. Hands shape the future. Hands grasp the means for a better world. All these thoughts lay within the consciousness of the mind waiting to be formulated in a manner of expression. Strangely enough it took a radio program to do it.

"One Sunday afternoon a friend and I were listening to a broadcast of the Allis-Chalmers union, when they played a recording of Bernie Aspell's. The young balladeer sang a song to the accompaniment of his guitar. He sang his composition, 'The Song of My Hands.' As the song unfolded it also kindled something within me. 'Who'll buy my hands?' was the sardonic, proud expression of one who knows full well their meaning.

"Three things happened: Bernie Aspell sang; my friend burst in with elated explanations of how the balladeer had just recently sung the very same thing to a group in Milwaukee—and I too caught the fire of inspiration. My lithograph was the result."

WHO'S who in this issue: Pablo Neruda, a contributing editor of NM, is one of the great poets of Latin America. He is a Communist member of the Chilean senate. A collection of his poems from 1925 to the present, *Residence on Earth*, has recently been published here by New Directions publishers. This volume will be reviewed in an early issue . . . Richard O. Boyer, noted foreign correspondent and magazine writer, is the author of *Dark Ship*, a new book on the National Maritime Union published this week by Little, Brown.

Then we have a veterans' contingent of writers who contribute articles especially written for this May Day issue. Walter Bernstein, author of *Keep Your Head Down*, won fame as a *Yank* correspondent when he was the first to interview Marshal Tito during the Partisan struggle against the Nazi occupying army . . . Abner W. Berry, a Negro ex-GI, has reported on the labor scene in Detroit for NM. Recently returned from the Motor City, Mr. Berry is now on the staff of the *Daily Worker* . . . Lawrence Emery wrote several memorable articles for NM from the Pacific theater during the war where he served as a Staff Sergeant. His short story on the Philippines, "The Liberators," published July 23, 1946 in NM, was considered one of the best NM stories of recent years.

NEXT week in NM: Alvah Bessie interviews Hanns Eisler, noted composer and brother of Gerhart. The Un-American Committee is now heading for Hollywood and J. Parnell Thomas, leader of the pack, was quoted as saying that the Hanns Eisler case may be "the best yet."

Correction: Stuart Cleveland, who wrote "Attack on the Campus" in last week's NM, informs us that he is no longer on the staff of the "Harvard Progressive."

new masses

established 1911

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NOW LISTEN, Mr. Congressman

The Senators and Representatives hear from the folks back home — in person. Men and women from labor's rank and file go to Washington in their fight against the union-busting bills.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington.

IT WAS a chilly, misty morning late in April when the New England delegation from steel, textile, electrical and other CIO locals walked up to the Capitol through grounds decked with blooming cherry and forsythia, burning bush and flowering bulbs. It was their first trip to Washington for the delegates I tagged along with, a Negro office worker and a white shopworker from the same plant-wide United Auto Workers local. They were here, along with more than 200 others from New England, to confront their Congressmen and Senators and if necessary throw into their teeth the lie that some of them repeated that only national union leaders opposed the crushing Taft-Ball and Hartley anti-union bills.

By May Day the big parade in Washington was slated to be over, the parade of CIO spokesmen from every region in the country, from hundreds of locals. In every case larger delegations arrived than those planned by the national CIO, reflecting the resentment sizzling at home. Nick Rataic, a steel worker (and son of a steel worker) from Hartford, where the mayor had proclaimed April "Defend Labor Month," told me how aroused were the workers in his steel fabricating plant, where he heads the local. "They know what their union means," he said. "They know if Congress puts these bills through it will mean 'back to the jungle.'"

So, although May Day signaled an end to the Washington parade of what last week appeared would total more than 1,500 CIO delegates, it was only the beginning of the continued mobilization of resistance in the grass-roots to the legislation which would pulverize the unions. Aiding them will be the AFL's massive $1,500,000 advertising and radio campaign against the legislation.

THEIR first official contact with their nation's Capitol, the Capitol currently overrun with oil and power lobbyists, was on the frigid side. A Capitol policeman held up an arm. "Five abreast from now on." But in the Senate and House Office buildings the Congressmen had no such protection. Not in fives, but in groups which occasionally overflowed offices so that hearing rooms were obtained for them, the delegates faced the men supposedly responsible to the people. In each case the men and women were from the legislator's district.

The attack was concentrated in the Senate, after the House had passed the Hartley bill. Some Senators dodged the delegates, but the determined union men and women followed them to Senate, called them off the floor, haunted their offices. Some Senators used insulting language. Some refused to answer questions, like Sen. Edward Martin of Pennsylvania, who instead read the Pennsylvania delegation a press release in which he alluded to the delegation as a "drove." Delegates told how Rep. E. Wallace Chadwick (R., Pa.) reportedly said, "You know how I stand. I certainly don't go along with organized labor." And how Rep. Ivor D. Fenton (R., Pa.), who voted against the Hartley bill but didn't think it anti-labor, when reminded that CIO Pres. Philip Murray said it was a first step to fascism, reportedly replied, "What's fascism and what's wrong with it?"

Others were smooth and suave, like Sen. Raymond E. Baldwin (R., Conn.), who called Harold Senior, the group leader, "Harold" and addressed the men and women squeezed into the hearing room as "you boys." From a corner of the room I could see the almost unvarying smile on his fleshy features. Chummily he confided that labor-management relations in Connecticut were one thing, but "the trouble is we have to deal with states which would be very glad to consider it a conspiracy to have a union."

As if it were a thoroughly reasonable approach, he explained he was not there "to write a labor bill the NAM wants—or to write a labor bill the unions want." He was told that the Wagner Act was designed to take away from the employer some of his unfair weapons. Chuckling, he pointed out somewhat coyly that "the fellows who drew this [the Taft bill] say they want to take away some of the unfair practices of unions." When a woman said sharply that he surely was "too realistic to go for that line," he said nothing. When the delegation left, it

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was without any idea as to how Senator Baldwin would vote.

EACH group was briefed on how to pin down even the most evasive Senator or Representative and warned that a "No" vote on the Hartley bill was no assurance of a "No" vote on a Senate-House conference report. So when a large group gathered in the office of Rep. James T. Patterson (R., Conn.), a well-turned-out former football star and Marine major who wore a dazzling tie featuring stars and blue and white stripes, they congratulated him on voting against the Hartley bill. But they had only started. At first he took refuge in saying that he never stated a "curbstone opinion." When several demanded whether he thought this a curbstone meeting, he said he was for "fair and legal legislation." At last a woman textile worker, the color mounting to the base of her broad green hat brim, demanded, "May we gather there is no point in the Hartley bill you could support?"

"I imagine there are some I could support," he drawled. "If anyone can show me [a repressive measure] where something that is strictly communism is involved, I'd vote for it."

At this a heavy-set man wearing glasses burst out that there was "a moral involved." The words poured forth. "We've been through two wars, some of us," he said. "I'm a steelworker. We can take just so much. You stand there and speak of communism. Eleven of my brothers on Memorial Day in East Chicago laid down their lives in 1937, in the Little Steel massacre. We didn't hear anyone yell about communism then. Now there is a definite move to destroy labor unions. Take the government out of our deliberations and let us sit across the table from management, unshackled, and we'll bargain. Little Steel struck for two years. But out of it came an agreement."

Later I found him with fellow steel workers standing in the hall. He said he was William Hurley, president of the CIO City Industrial Union Council of New Haven. "He's concerned with legal rights," he said, alluding to Rep. Patterson. "Oh, I know. The employers call in all their lawyers and decide just how they can trample on me in a legal way. Do they think we're going to give up our unions and our Constitutional rights?" Others gathered around, spoke angrily in their clipped New England voices—Jim Bowker of Hartford, head of a United Electrical Workers local, who was burned up because Rep. William J. Miller (R., Conn.), a fellow union man and son of a former official of the Loomfixers' union, had voted for the Hartley bill; John Albinger, New Haven steel worker, and others. "We constitute the rank and file," one told me. "When we speak, it's because the rank and file told us what to say."

Significantly, Rep. Patterson's invitation to Red-baiting had resulted in not one response of the kind he apparently hoped for.

WHO are these workers, who were so excoriated in three days of debate on the Hartley bill in the House? As Rep. John Blatnik (D., Minn.), a working man elected by workers, asked, "What have these people done to incur the abuse and vilification that has been heaped upon their heads . . . in this Hall of Congress?"

I took a look around a YWCA hall in Washington as some forty-five delegates from plants in fifteen states, members of the Food and Tobacco Workers Union, reported on their visits to Senators and Representatives from their far-flung regions. About one-third were Negroes. Many were from areas organized during the war, and were new to political action. They were from the lower-paid industries, and they now have dignity in a union, and higher wages than ever before. White and black are on an equal footing. They had worked hard to attain their pretty new spring hats and the white frilled blouses and smart suits, and now they were working hard to keep their rights. Faces were serious. Hands expert in canneries, or making cigars or cigarettes for the bosses, now were busy checking off Senators' replies to questionnaires on pending legislation. At one end of the U-shaped table, a blonde, middle-aged woman slipped off her shoes, flexed her toes, moistened her pencil between rouged lips, and set to work. "No" she wrote after anti-poll tax, FEPC, anti-lynching, as a delegate reported, "And on the anti-lynching bill, he said no. When people get more God into their hearts they'll stop lynching one another, he said." She was speaking of Sen. A. Willis Robertson (D., Va.).

Irvin W. Cotton of Local 102 was introduced, a tall Negro from Corinth, Miss. He told of visiting Sen. James O. Eastland. He spat out the name "Eastland." He wasn't very disappointed, because he'd heard his campaign speeches. "He didn't want a closed shop. He didn't want a union shop. He didn't want a checkoff."

This courageous Negro from the state "represented" by Sen. Eastland and Rep. John Rankin told how the Senator boasted that he was there looking out for the people who operated the plants. He told about the compress company where he works, now ninety percent organized, one of seventy-five owned by one company. He told about the company stooges the union is combatting. "I haven't caught any yet, but I got my bait out." Later he told me more, how Sen. Eastland began by cursing and ended by cursing. "He was very vulgar," he said gently. "About these two bills, he said he wished he could get something that would make it worse for unions. And he said to me, 'You'd better let that alone,' meaning the union. Yes," he laughed, "he accused us of being Communists. He didn't want to think I really was from Corinth. Asked me all kind of questions about who I knew, how long I worked there." He fished in his bill-fold, pulled out a worn paper which indicated he had been in the plant since 1915. Not that he showed it to the Senator. He just told him he'd been there quite a while. A reefer in the plant, he started working ten hours a day at ten cents an hour, and since his union got a contract, makes 67½ cents an hour. Before the union, wages were fifty cents across the board. "Our local's got 112 dues-paying members," he said with satisfaction, "and it's brought 'em out a whole lot to see what we did and what's going on in the world."

THEN there were the five fashionably-dressed women from Lima, O. They might have been a delegation from a league of women voters, or a parent-teacher association, or, except that they didn't have that congealed look, from the DAR. When, interviewing three of them, I suggested as much, indicating their spring hats and shiny purses, and asked how Sen. Robert A. Taft had the nerve to dodge them, which he did throughout their three-day stay, Mrs. Leota Snyder replied soberly. "We worked hard for this," she said. She is the head of the local in the cigar-making plant they all work for. "We've spent our lives in

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that plant. It is our life. We ought to own it for all the cigars we've made."

As I wrote down each name, each was particular I put the "Mrs." down. Four were widows. "I am going to tell that to the next Congressman who tells me he is for a rent increase because he is thinking of the widow who rents out an apartment or rooms," said one. Mrs. Snyder had been in the plant since 1905. Mrs. Effie Webb, the PAC chairman in the local, and the only one of the five who'd been to Washington before, had spent thirty-five years there all told. They used to start work at 6:30 A.M. and work until 5:45 P.M., six days a week, and when they got nine or ten dollars at the end of the week they thought it a good week. Cigar making is piece-work. The women got forty-five cents, the men eighty-five cents, for bunchbreaking. "We finally made some soap-box speeches and got half a day off Saturday." The company gradually weeded out the men, thinking the women wouldn't want to organize. Which was a laugh. They'd tried again and again. In the fall of '41, they went on the picketline, wound up with a contract. Last fall they got a good raise, but now the company is making cheaper, nine-cent cigars, and they will make less in wages.

"You couldn't raise families and work like that, could you?" I asked. The woman nearest me, with a pretty face, blue eyes, clear skin and prematurely gray hair—Mrs. Olivia Kuehl—laughed. "I have six children. One's now in the Army. My baby, she's nine." She dated everything about her work at the plant according to her children's ages. "I went to work the day after I was sixteen. Let's see, I was there five months before my first was born. Then, in six months, I was back in the plant. Then, I was that way again. I quit in January, for my second, and was back in the plant the middle of May. I worked till September, then in December had my baby. I worked till the plant closed down—let's see, she was a year and a half old then, and she's sixteen now. That was '32. Then I went back in '40, when he wasn't working. I'm the only one of us girls still has my man. He's an electrician. All us girls work because we have to. How would I school and clothe my kids on one pay?"

Mrs. Snyder spoke up. She had no kids of her own but she'd raised two. "And a mighty good job you've done. Anyone'd think they were your own," said the mother of six approvingly. Mrs. Webb, the thirty-five year veteran who has worked in every department in the plant, in every phase of cigar-making, said rather apologetically she had only one, a grown son. I asked Mrs. Kuehl how she managed with six.

"I never feel sorry for a woman unless she has seven," she laughed. "How did I do it? Work. Come home at night, launder diapers, iron shirts. I bottled all my babies. Sterilize in the morning, before I go to work. And sew. Girls you have to sew for. Work—" she stopped a minute. "Now we have a lot of young girls in the plant. They don't have the dexterity we older women have—though I'm not old, I'm only thirty-nine. But when I think of it, I don't want them to know the work we've known. Work, work, work. It's all I've done all my life. We're wage slaves, that's what we are."

"Yes," said Mrs. Snyder mildly, her eyes behind their glasses looking off in the distance. "Lincoln freed the slaves. And Roosevelt released us. Now they want to put us back into the shackles."

"Some of the workers are—well, like they're afraid," said Mrs. Kuehl. "Like they don't want to see what's coming. But the day they put an end to our union, they'll wake up. Look," she said, as we arose. Her blue eyes were alight, her little quick hands that make 3,300 cigars a week for the bosses caught at my sleeve in her eagerness. "What kind of a world do we want to bring our kids up in? We're working-class people. All they've got is tied up in our right to strike, to have unions. What'll they have without that? Nothing."

"Some people may be scared," Mrs. Snyder said, still mild and calm. "But we're not. And it looks like Senator Taft is more scared of us than we are of him."

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Radio program: ". . . and now the author will tell how he wrote his new book, 'Why the Russians Behave Like Russians.'"

Before writing this book I talked with some forty-odd people, including Max Eastman, Eugene Lyons, Louis Budenz and Victor Kravchenko. I am indebted to them for their unbiased advice and assistance.

All available evidence points to the fact that the Russians behave like Russians because they *are* Russians. Their newspapers are printed in Russian; they speak Russian, and most of them were even born in Russia. The historical implications of this fact are portentous. It explains why at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam and the recent Moscow conference the inflexible Russians insisted on behaving like Russians.

I went to the USSR prepared to be objective, even going so far as to leave a few pages of my book unfinished. However, conditions in the Soviet Union are poor. Their buildings in Stalingrad, Kiev and Odessa are rather shabby and nothing compared to Rockefeller Center. Homes are terribly crowded, a man and his wife very often having to share the same room.

Throughout my stay in Russia I made a determined effort to talk to the man in the street. This involved considerable difficulty since I spent most of the time in a hotel room finishing my book. I did, however, interview a waiter who told me he hadn't slept for three nights. This is described fully in chapter five of my book, entitled "Unrest in the Soviet."

The strictest kind of censorship is still imposed upon correspondents in Moscow. I tried on three separate occasions to go through Molotov's files but was stopped each time by a member of the dread NKVD disguised as the night janitor.

●

President Truman tried out his new bowling alley for the photographers but failed to throw a strike. He seems to have more talent for breaking them.

●

John O'Donnell says he doesn't know what the word "fascist" means. And what's more, even his best friends won't tell him.

●

The New York "Daily News" has gone on record as opposed to prohibition. Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind that the "News" is all wet.

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BACK TO WHERE THEY CAME FROM

The idea of socialism is native American. And the Jeffersonians, Abolitionists and pioneer trade unionists were denounced as "foreign agents."

By RICHARD O. BOYER

TODAY when socialism is described as a foreign plot and those who favor it as an ultimate American solution are described as foreign agents, it may smack of heresy to suggest that the initial, rudimentary impulse toward socialism in the United States came from the words "All men are created equal." Yet the ink had scarcely dried on the Declaration of Independence before Americans were asking why, if all men were created equal, those who worked most had least and those who worked least had most. Jefferson, author of the words, still lived when the great English utopian socialist, Robert Owen, addressing Congress, justified his plea for an American socialism on the principles of the Declaration of Independence. The truth is that the aspiration for socialism is as American as the Mississippi River and almost as old as the nation.

It is also true that American Communists are an older political organization in this country than is the Republican Party. The Republican Party was organized in Ripon, Wisconsin, in 1854. However, there was a Marxist Communist Club in Cleveland as early as 1851 when it resolved to "use all means to abolish slavery which is wholly repugnant to the principles of true Democracy." As a matter of fact such American Communists as Joseph Weydemeyer were instrumental in establishing the Republican Party and helped win its first successful election. Communist associates of Marx came to this country as early as 1845. In 1853, a year before the founding of the Republican Party, the Communist Club of New York was formed; while in the next few years Communist Clubs, all of them composed of followers of Karl Marx—as were those of Cleveland and New York—were organized in Milwaukee, St. Louis, Chicago and Cincinnati.*

On this sixty-first May Day it is of vital importance, it seems to me, that the labor movement understand that both Communists and the concept of socialism have their roots in America and American history. The canards that Communists and socialism are basically foreign are being used for divisive purposes in the hope of destroying the labor movement. As in the past the crux of the plot against labor is to declare a part of it un-American in an effort to induce the whole of it to internecine strife. We see it in operation as a part of the CIO attacks another part of itself while it cries "Red!" and goes about the work of its own enemies. The heart of the plan, as is daily demonstrated, is to move first against Communists and behind this smokescreen to move against all labor and the whole American people. Until labor understands that Communists are, and long have been, as American as the Grand Canyon and that socialism is as native as Indian corn, labor will not be able to withstand the assault against it. For it cannot aid in the attack on part of itself without destroying all of itself.

As for socialism, Jefferson had been dead but three years when Thomas Skidmore, a leader in the American trade union movement, wrote without benefit of Marx, "If then, it is seen, that the steam engine, for example, greatly impoverish or destroy the poor what have they to do but lay hold of it? Let them appropriate also the cotton factories, the iron foundries, the rolling mills, houses, churches, ships, goods, steam boats, the fields of agriculture, as is their right." In the same year, 1829, the Association of the Working People of New Castle, Delaware, passed a resolution typical of the period declaring, "The poor have no laws; the laws are made by the rich for the rich." In 1835 John Commerford, also a leading figure in the American trade union movement, argued before the General Trades Union of New York for the social control and operation of industry, not for the profit of the few but for the benefit of all.

There were more than fifty communities in the United States during the 1840's that called themselves Socialist or Communist and among their proponents were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, William E. Channing, George Ripley, John Greenleaf Whittier, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody and Albert Brisbane, all of them giants of their day. While they were ethical and utopian rather than scientific Socialists, not one of them hesitated to indict at times the young capitalist system as a source of injustice through its very nature. Orestes A. Brownson, the New England reformer and writer, in 1840 foreshadowed in inexact and literary terms Marx's discovery of surplus value, and the American anthropologist, Lewis Morgan, independently evolved in rudimentary form the Marxist concept of historical materialism. Thousands of American Socialists of more than a century ago, most of them disciples of the Welshman Robert Owen and the Frenchman Charles Fourier, based their arguments in part upon the words "all men are created equal." Nor did they think that they were any the less American because the foreigners Owen and Fourier agreed with them that all men are created equal. While socialism is not now an immediate issue before the American people, it is nevertheless clear that until an equitable American society

* Much of the material and most of the quotations in this article are taken from Philip S. Foner's *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, International Publishers, N. Y., one of the most important books to be published in a decade. (It will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of NM.)

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has been attained the ancient words will live to haunt the last reactionary.

AMERICAN Marxists, whom poll-tax Congressmen now describe as foreign agents, fought slavery as Abolitionists, fought it later as soldiers in the Union Army and worked for labor and progress during the administrations of Presidents Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland, Harrison, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Truman. When the first Communists came to this country the nation was scarce half its present size, the Mexican War was still in the future, the territory west of the Mississippi was an uninhabited wilderness, gold was yet to be discovered in California, gasoline was still an unknown, railroads were a curiosity in much of the country, Indians remained on the frontier, the cowboys were still to see their great days, the Civil War had not been fought, modern monopoly and modern production had not yet come into being, most Americans were farmers, cities were an exception and the nation itself was only sixty-nine years old. If told to go back where he came from, a Communist, like any other American, will finally arrive back in Europe or elsewhere across the sea. But before he arrives there he will arrive at the blockhouse of the frontier, at American cities built partly by his sweat, and at many an American battlefield where Communist blood has been shed.

The charge of being foreign agents was leveled, as most of us know, against the Sons of Liberty, those mechanics, artisans and workingmen who organized the American Revolution. They too were "an international conspiracy" for they had members, Foner reveals in his book, in Ireland and supporters in Britain. They were described by Tory equivalents of Rankin as "foreign vagabonds," "descendants of convicts," and as "a mixed rabble of Scotch and Irish foreigners" intent on "discord and faction." For that matter, there has scarce been a progressive move in all American history that has not been branded as foreign, the source of the accusation being that America has not been an island sufficient unto itself but part of the world. Progressives the world over have always helped American progressives, while American patriots have always helped the patriots of other nations. The Jeffersonians, too, were declared to be foreign agents, representatives of an international conspiracy bought and paid for by French revolutionary gold. Scores were sent to jail under the Alien and Sedition Act.

Even the Abolitionists were declared to be foreign agents, with their real object not the overthrow of slavery but the overthrow of the American government so that the British could pick up the pieces. Dr. James H. Thornwell, in a typical comment of the period, said in 1851 that all Abolitionists were foreign "Communists and Socialists" as well as "atheists, Red Republicans and French Jacobins." To reactionaries even the Civil War was a foreign conspiracy for it was supported by the international workingmen of Europe under the leadership of Karl Marx.

From Foner's important book we learn that the words "foreign conspiracy" are the most persistent smear words in American history. Indeed the terms were once used against all of the trade union movement almost exactly as they are today used against that part said to be led by Communists. When Boston shoemakers were battling for a ten-hour day 122 years ago, employers declared that the trade unions then being organized were foreign conspiracies. Trade unions, they said, were inherently conspiracies which "had been brought over from Europe by foreigners who carried with them a spirit of discontent and insubordination to which our native mechanics have hitherto been strangers." It was charged in 1830 in New York that trade unions advocated "force and violence" and that they were led by conspiracies of foreigners. When the first general strike in American history was organized in 1835 in Philadelphia, employers declared that it was led "by lazy, idle mischief-makers from abroad." It was charged that the hunger demonstrations growing out of the depression of 1857 were led by "ultra-Communistic radicals." During the great strikes of the Seventies and Eighties, when scores were killed and some even hanged, it was invariably said that the thousands fighting for a better America were part of an international conspiracy.

AS EFFORTS are made to howl down all dissident voices in America, it is important, I believe, to show there was a time when Americans had more fear of standing silent in the face of injustice than fear of penalties for speaking their views. As the Truman administration begins a witch-hunt for any government employe who ever had an idea, it is necessary, I think, to examine that American history which reveals that ideas called dangerous now have long been at the very roots of our country's growth. America has never been a vacuum. Ideas anywhere in the world have always found their way here, ideas that cannot be held un-American simply because people other than Americans have held them, too. If the French profit from our experience, that makes them none the less French. If Jefferson was indebted to the Englishman Locke and to the French Encyclopedists for the ideas of the Declaration of Independence, that makes it none the less American. That Lincoln's Gettysburg address was written in English does not mean that it is British.

Before so many Americans had been reduced to the image of monopoly capital they frequently spoke with the accents of Ely Moore, first working-class member of Congress and president of the New York General Trades' Union. In his maiden speech in Congress in 1835, he said that such name-calling as "Red" and "Anarchist" had been used throughout history by those who sought an excuse for plundering the people. History proved, he said, that the real danger to society was the concentration of capital. "History, sir," he said, "will bear me out in the declaration that the aristocracy of whatever age or country, have at all times invariably and eternally robbed the people. . . . Where there is one instance that the rights of property have been violated by the people . . . there are five thousand instances where the people have been plundered by the heartless cupidity of the privileged few."

And Ralph Waldo Emerson, writing in 1844, said, "All this beneficient socialism is a friendly omen, and the swelling cry of voices for the education of the people indicates that Government has other offices than those of banker and executioner."

The present bills before Congress, stripping labor of the right to bargain effectively, have often been called "slave bills." When labor was faced with similar restrictions a century ago, the poets and writers of America spoke with an eloquence that is not heard today. John Greenleaf Whittier, in words that might refer to the present anti-labor offensive, said, "So then it

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has come to this, that in a land of equal rights, a laborer cannot fix the amount of his wages in connection with his fellow laborer without being charged as a criminal before our courts of law. The merchants may agree upon their prices; the lawyers upon their fees; the physicians upon their charges; the manufacturers upon the wages given their operatives, but the *laborer* shall not consult his interest and fix the prices of his toil and skill. If this be law, it is unjust and wicked."

And William Cullen Bryant said at about the same time, "If this is not slavery we have forgotten its definition. Strike the right of associating for the sale of labor from the privilege of a freeman, and you may as well bind him to a master or ascribe him to the soil."

Of course all of these men were called "Reds" or the equivalent, but they preferred that to silence.

Abraham Lincoln, speaking of labor, said: "No good thing has been or can be enjoyed by us without having first cost labor. And inasmuch as most good things are produced by labor, it follows that all such things of right belong to those whose labor has produced them. But it has so happened in all ages of the world, that some have labored and others have without labor enjoyed a large proportion of the fruits. This is wrong and should not continue. To secure each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible, is a worthy object of any good government."

The crux of socialism and the goal of Communists is "to secure each laborer the whole product of his labor."

"I knew him when he didn't have a hand-grenade to his name."

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On This May Day

An Editorial by A. B. MAGIL

IN THE capital city of a certain country a young man sat in his room listening to the radio. He was a government employe and after his day's work he was relaxing for a while before going out to dinner. The young man's room was on the ground floor of an old apartment building. Outside the open window he could hear voices of the passersby mingling with the traffic in the warm spring air. Suddenly, numb, paralyzing terror gripped him. Was what he was hearing over the radio something it was permissible for a government employe to listen to, something he could safely allow passersby in the street to hear streaming out of his window? The sense of terror lasted only a few moments. The voice coming over the air waves was actually that of a conservative commentator. What a relief! The young man smiled feebly. And then there crept through him a feeling of humiliation that was even more painful than the previous terror.

This is a true story. It happened not in Nazi Germany but in the USA, in Washington. At the risk of unleashing a new nationwide witch-hunt let me say that I have met this government employe and heard the story from his own lips.

Thousands of other government workers suffer this moral degradation that turns man into mouse.

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," said Franklin D. Roosevelt. Two years have passed since he died and his pigmy successor today employs the potent weapon of fear to paralyze the mind and conquer the heart of America.

"Communism!" the Missouri Coolidge shouts, pointing to all quarters of the globe and caressing the lands flowing with oil and tyranny. "Communism!" yells the Mississippi ape-man (and in a stage whisper: "kike" and "nigger"). "Communism!" roars J. Edgar Hoover, pointing to the Bill of Rights. "Communism!" jubilate the GOP Congressmen, sharpening the axe for labor.

But it still remains true that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. The plutocrats and their political shamans are shouting "boo" in an effort to frighten the American people out of their wits. But it isn't working too well. Nearly a month after the deadline set by President Truman for the adoption of his program of economic and military domination of Greece, Turkey and any other pieces of foreign real estate that strike Wall Street's fancy, the legislation has with much cajolery and camouflage finally passed the Senate. But even some in the ruling class view this pig in a poke with trepidation. As for the American people, despite the Senate vote, sixty-three percent of them—nearly two out of three—according to a recent Gallup poll, want the problem of aid to Greece and Turkey turned over to the United Nations. *This marks a moral defeat for the Truman-Vandenberg doctrine.* Not for years has the foreign policy enunciated by a President of the United States encountered such widespread resistance and misgivings among his own people, let alone those of other countries.

And consider the two-pronged drive against the living standards and liberties of the American people, one prong labeled anti-Communism, the other "correction of labor abuses." Though this drive remains a serious menace, it means something that the anti-Communist gladiators suffered a setback when public protests compelled them to drop their plan to outlaw the Communist Party. And the anti-labor legislation which the Republican and tory Democratic politicos lifted from the Hitler book has had the effect of bringing labor unity closer to realization than at any time since the split between the AFL and CIO more than a decade ago.

YES, this May Day, without blinking the difficulties and dangers that face us, there is reason for all Americans who fight for democracy and peace to lift up their heads and their hearts.

It is not surprising that those who use the strategy of fear to divide our people against themselves and deprive them of strength and vision have also sought to erase out of our history the May Day heritage. This international labor holiday is as American as the Lincoln penny, born in the 1880's in the struggle for the eight-hour day and later adopted by the labor and socialist movements of other countries. In fact, it was the American Federation of Labor, then in its infancy, which initiated the movement to set aside May 1, 1886 as a day of united labor effort in behalf of the eight-hour day.

It is sometimes forgotten that the eight-hour movement after the Civil War was closely linked to another movement: that for independent political action by labor and its allies. The convention which in 1867 organized the National Labor Union, the first nationwide federation of trade unions, joined these two issues in the same resolution, calling for the organization of a national labor party. The president of the NLU and the outstanding labor leader of that period, William H. Sylvis, who established close relations with Karl Marx's International Workingmen's Association, was an ardent advocate of independent political action. The revival of the eight-hour day issue in the Eighties again brought political action to the fore, with the AFL convention in 1886 urging "a most generous support to the independent political movement of the workers." In that year labor parties were formed in various parts of the country and scored a number of successes.

In the years after the Civil War large sections of the farmers and city middle classes, rebelling against the tyranny of the trusts and their domination of both major parties, likewise struck out on the path of political independence. The most effective of these ventures was the People's Party, which elected many members of Congress and state legislatures as well as several governors and whose presidential candidate in 1892 polled over a million votes.

Today the trusts have swollen gigantically and simultaneously has grown their power for evil. But the democratic forces in our own and other countries, especially the labor movement, have also achieved an unprecedented strength and maturity. After the current Congressional obscenities, after Truman's naked bid to take up Hitler's *anti-Komintern* crusade, shall the American people continue to speak politically through the parties of their enemies? It is time to make a break. Millions are already seeking a new deal. Millions of others, still clinging to the Democratic Party, are searching in bafflement and despair for the lost image of the Roosevelt heritage. Still other millions, who in the last

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election turned from the Democrats to the Republicans, are tasting the wormwood of disillusion. All of these millions have or will shortly have had enough.

Who, beholding the rulers and despoilers of America, depression hot on their footsteps, leading our country to the edge of the precipice, can say that the time has not come for labor—united labor—together with farmers, small businessmen, professionals, students, the Negro people, to proclaim a new declaration of independence from the parties of big business and launch a party of their own? May Day is a time for shaking off chains. The whole of the next year can become the people's May Day.

FURRIERS' GOLD

The Fur and Leather Workers-CIO are out in front of labor's ranks—on payday as well as May Day. Meet Ben, leader in their winning struggles.

By WALTER BERNSTEIN

ONE morning in the year 1924, the day after the New York local of the International Fur Workers Union-AFL had elected a new slate of officers, two men entered the midtown office of the local. The first man was named Little Augie. He was a slim, blond boy, mild-mannered and polite, and he was the leader of an organization of professional low-lifes called the Christie Street Gang. One of the interesting jobs performed by the Christie Street Gang was to see that no democratic elements were introduced into the Fur Workers Union. The slogan at union meetings in those days was "Sit down or I'll knock you down." If the dissident member did not obey, members of the gang persuaded him. For these charitable acts, Little Augie was handsomely paid by the heads of the union. Now, after the election, he was coming to see that the new officials followed suit.

He was sadly disappointed. The newly-elected manager of the union, a middle-sized, chunky fur cutter, told him at once to get the hell out of the room and never come back. The effect on Little Augie, who was not accustomed to being spoken to like that, was instantaneous. He got the hell out of the room. This unexpected sight filled workers standing outside with such unrestrained delight that they immediately seized upon Augie and his henchman and proceeded joyfully to beat their brains out. To them, it meant that racketeering was finally on the way out of the fur union. It meant that the rank and file would now receive financial reports, that membership books would no longer be sold on the streets by gangsters, that free and honest elections would be held. That same day, the new officers were beseiged by workers who had grievances they had been terrorized into keeping secret for years.

The manager of the New York local at that time was Ben Gold, the present head of the International Fur and Leather Workers of the United States and Canada-CIO. The two other officers still active in the union were Irving Potash and Sam Liebowitz. The three of them typify the kind of collective leadership that has made the IFLWU one of the most successful of all unions, with the highest wage rate of any manufacturing industry in the country. Gold has been president of the International since 1937, the year the national convention of the union voted to leave the AFL for the new CIO. He has been in the union since 1912, shortly after he arrived in the US from Bessarabia. Gold's age is a standing joke around union headquarters, since he refuses to divulge it, but he is listed in *Who's Who in Labor* as forty-nine. He is also listed in the same directory as a member of the Communist Party, a designation Gold insisted on before he would allow his name to be used.

The brief and victorious incident with Little Augie is typical of Ben Gold, and in a way symbolizes the enthusiasm with which decisions are carried out by the rank and file.

GOLD is a man of considerable courage, capable of instant decision, and the fur and leather workers hold him in deep respect and affection. It is true that many of his qualities are shared by other labor leaders. There are those just as courageous, who are as good tacticians and who have just as much concern for their workers. There are others as modest as Gold, and presumably there are even those who, like him, play the violin. The particular interest in Gold, apart from the fact that he combines these qualities in an especially dynamic way, is that, as a member of the Executive Board of the CIO and the National Committee of the Communist Party, he represents an important expression of Marxism in the labor movement. He is openly a Communist in the CIO and respected as such. Arguments about the iniquity of "Communist-dominated" labor unions vanish before one compelling fact: those unions that are alleged to be under Communist leadership have a habit of coming up with the best obtainable conditions for workers in their industry. In New York State, according to its Department of Labor figures, the average hourly wage for workers in fur goods was $2.30. This is the highest wage average in all state manufacturing and is almost a dollar more per hour than the average for all manufacturing, which in February of 1946 was $1.33.

It is interesting that the average for textile workers, who are represented by a CIO union known for its Red-baiting leadership, was only $.98½. In the first two decades of Gold's leadership, from 1925 to 1945, the minimum wage scales for first-class cutters went from $46 to $75 a week, and similar gains were registered for operators, nailers and finishers. Fur workers as a whole now have a thirty-five-hour week, an old-age retirement system, a health insurance plan, a week's vacation

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with pay and protection from arbitrary discharge. The political beliefs of their leadership, it has been argued, have constantly produced better working conditions.

Actually, the leadership of the IFLWU represents a system whereby the different political elements in the union are all represented in both elected and appointed positions. It would be fairly simple for the left-wing to control all the positions, since they have a clear voting majority. Instead, a combined slate is run in all elections, so that the right-wing has a share of the positions even greater than their numerical strength should proportionately allow. Gold, the union's president, is a Communist. The secretary-treasurer, Pietro Lucchi, is a right-winger, the former president of the right-wing faction, in the days when the union was split into two separate sections. This system, more prevalent in European trade unions than in the United States, has been in effect since 1937 and has accounted for the internal harmony that has been a condition for the union's great success.

Gold and other leaders of the union regret that so many years were spent in internecine warfare. "Lucchi and I fought ten years like cats and dogs," Gold says, shaking his head. "What we could have built in that time!" In 1935, when the right and left wings merged into one union, William Green, Matthew Woll and David Dubinsky all tried to keep Lucchi from working with the Communists. At the merger meeting Lucchi publicly denounced them and stated that he would not be dissuaded from working for unity. When Gold points out in conversation that he and Lucchi have, of course, had their disagreements, Lucchi, heavy-set and white-haired, says, "The whole labor movement should have such disagreements as Ben and I have had in the past twelve years. Then you would see a real labor movement in this country."

THE story of the Fur and Leather Workers Union is one of bitter, bloody struggle against gangsters, factionalism, bureaucracy and employers. In 1912, when Gold first joined the old AFL union, conditions in the fur industry, like those in most industries, were very bad. The union was totally inefficient, led by opportunists and racketeers, who looked upon the workers with contempt. They called them "*moisches*," a Yiddish term meaning, as one of the old-timers explained, "a thing that crawls on its stomach. It doesn't know what it is, where it's going, or what it wants. It's a nothing." Gold and the others built the union on a foundation of these so-called "*moisches*."

Gold himself came to prominence in 1920, when a strike the union heads could not avert broke out. The strike was lost, smashed by the combined tactics of the employers and the union leaders, who could sell out a strike if they could not stop it. But Gold had emerged as a strike hall chairman and there was no stopping him or the militant elements he represented. From then on, he led the revolt against the corrupt leadership. In 1925 he was elected manager of the New York joint board, and the gangsters were on the way out. After that the long-suffering Greek fur workers were organized, and in 1926 the accumulated discontent broke out in New York in an industry-wide strike against the fur manufacturers' association.

This strike came at a time when there simply were no strikes. It was a time of boom and labor intimidation. To call such a strike at that time was daring. To win it, as this was won, was phenomenal. It was won, as might be expected, over the heads of the International officers, who tried to settle it with a phony agreement. They imported Bill Green to make this agreement with the manufacturers. Then they called a meeting in Carnegie Hall to get the strikers to ratify the agreement.

Goons were stationed at the doors to screen the strikers who entered and none of the strike leaders were allowed in. The strategy committee at first wanted to call all strikers away from the meeting, but Gold persuaded them that they should be told to go. He was convinced that they would recognize the phoniness of the agreement. He was right. The strikers attended in a body, and when Green stood up to speak they would not let him open his mouth. They booed him and the others on the platform for two and a half hours, yelling "We want Gold!" and finally the meeting broke up without the agreement being ratified. The agreement finally signed was one that the New York leadership had fought for. The furriers became the first union in manufacturing to get a union agreement and a five-day, forty-hour week.

This was too much for the International, which saw its pie-cards threatened. It expelled the New York group and set up its own outfit. The left-wing, headed by Gold, joined the Trade Union Educational League (later the Trade Union Unity League) and became part of the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union. The next eight years were full of factional warfare in which the NTWIU fought for the workers' interests. In 1935, the left and right wings finally merged and were taken back by the International. In 1937 Gold became president of the International. Two years later the Fur Workers Union-CIO united with the 5,000-strong CIO Leather Workers and the present organization was formed.

Today, the total membership of the IFLWU is about 110,000, divided fairly evenly between fur and leather. The fur workers are concentrated around metropolitan New York; the leather workers are all over the Eastern states and the Middle West. Most of the fur workers are Jewish, with many Italians and Greeks; the leather workers are Italians, Negroes, Poles, Irish, Greek and smaller groups. They work together without discrimination. The union carries out an active and successful fight against Jim Crow and other forms of discrimination, even among those groups, in both the South and North, which are generally considered to be beyond persuasion on this score.

The success of the IFLWU has not, of course, been dependent on one man. Gold is vehement on this subject and points constantly to the collective leadership that he insists is responsible for all gains made by the union. On the other hand, it seems evident that his personal leadership has been a marked contribution. He is a brilliant organizer, his chief ability tactical and strategic. As one union official has said, "In negotiations he is quicker than the cleverest employer." A few of the old hands at the union have some regrets at what they term the deterioration of employer quality. "In the old days," they say sadly, "it was a pleasure to negotiate with an intellectual employer. Today a high-type boss is an exception." They sound at times like the managers of a champion who has run out of first-class opposition. It is apparently a pleasure to see Gold go ten fast rounds with an opponent worthy of his steel. "He can make a boss give and like it," one of his friends has said, with understandable awe.

Gold is an excellent speaker, switch-

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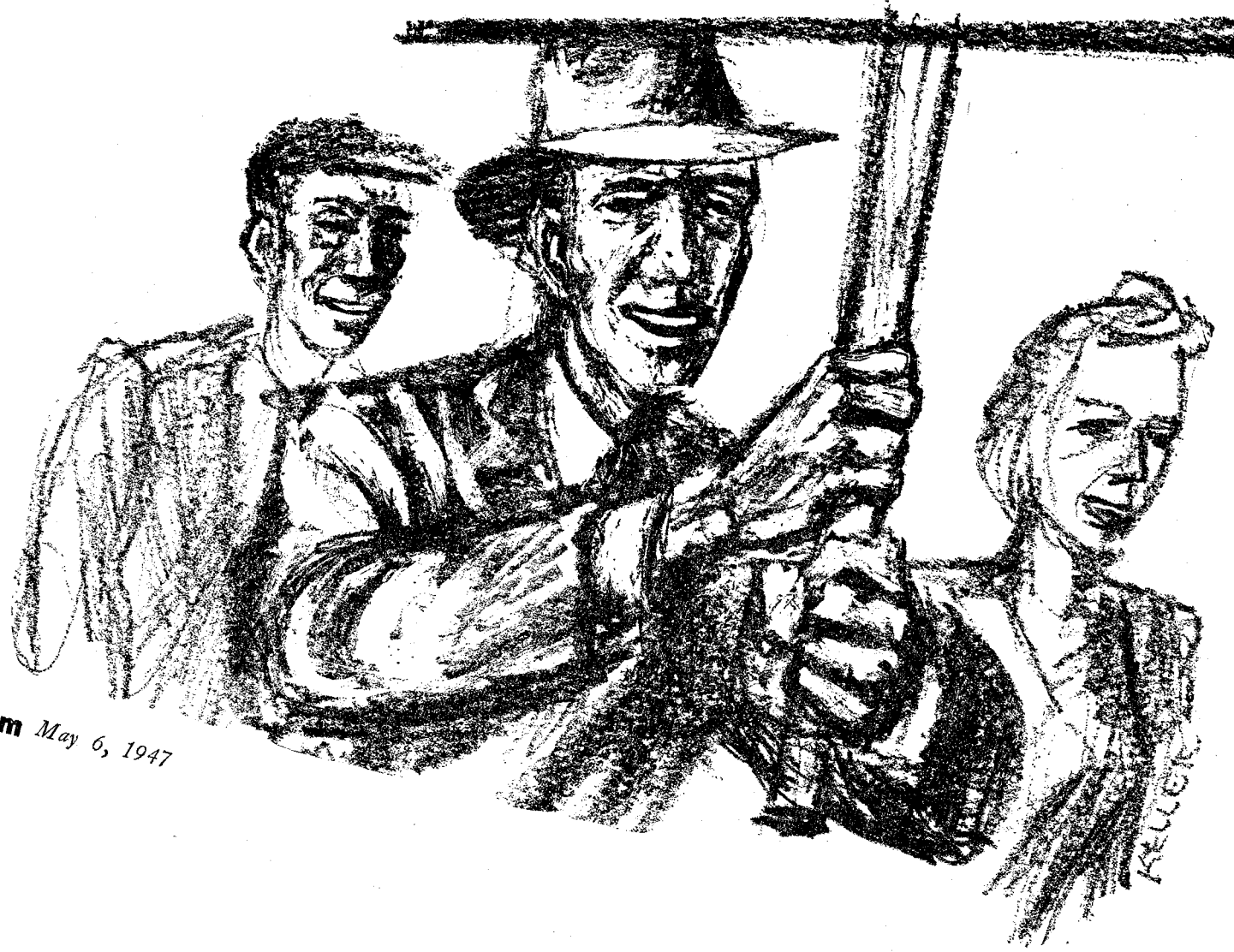
THE EDITORS



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ing from Yiddish to English as the occasion demands. He is frequently asked to speak at the end of meetings, so that the audience will remain until the end. His courage, like that of the other union leaders, is taken for granted. After the union had rid itself of its own gangsters, it was forced to cope with the mobs working the protection racket on fur manufacturers. Chief among these were Lepke and Gurrah, who sold employers immunity from labor trouble and strikes. Pitched battles between Lepke goons and fur workers were frequent. When Lepke was finally arrested and brought to trial, no businessman would testify against him for fear of retaliation. He was finally convicted on the testimony of two IFLWU leaders, Irving Potash and Sam Burt. Gold participated in these battles, but he has only been beaten up once, in the early Twenties, when he refused to shut up at a gangster-dominated meeting. He laid out two hoodlums before someone got him from behind with a chair.

TODAY, Gold is still middle-sized and chunky, yielding little to the years. He is young-looking, except for the wrinkles around his eyes, with a square, friendly face and a warm manner. He is not as excitable as he used to be, but he is still a volatile man. When he gets angry or excited, he grows rigid and clenches his fists. He is something of an ascetic, with little regard for how or where he lives. "God forbid Ben should have even a rocker in his house," a friend once said, adding hastily, "but personally he's very immaculate." He is a neat, almost fastidious dresser. He has been married for almost twenty years. A few years ago he wrote a novel in Yiddish called *Avreml Broide*, which was published by the Morning Freiheit Association, of which he is president. It is the story of a boy who comes to America from Bessarabia, works in the fur industry, and is killed in Spain fighting fascism. The book sold some 8,000 copies, but according to one of Gold's friends it attempted to cram too much into too short a space. Gold is now working on another book, a collection of short pieces.

He also claims to be a good fisherman, but few people have seen visible proof of this.

There is a saying among fur workers: "If we only had another Gold," but Gold is impatient with this kind of talk. He feels that he is only the expression of a certain policy enunciated by the union's collective leadership. He believes that correct policy is the all-important factor, and attributes his successes to the understanding of the objective state of affairs given him by Marxism. He bases his strength on the working class and his own understanding as a Communist. He is so convinced of the primacy of this that he usually tends to minimize his own role in the history of the union. He has a profound faith in the people he works for. They follow him for what he is, as well as for what he represents.

In the last analysis, Gold believes that if an issue is presented clearly to workers they will make the correct decision. He recalls the time he was trying to convince a meeting that a certain business agent, while honest, was also inefficient and should not be reelected. In that period, honesty among business agents was so miraculous that any other discrepancies in character went unnoticed. Argument after argument failed to budge the meeting. Finally Gold took the floor and said, simply, "My grandmother is an honest woman. Not only is she honest, she is also religious. But would she make a good business agent?"

The man was not reelected.

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AFTER MOSCOW

An Editorial by JOHN STUART

I HOPE we have learned now not to hot up the fires of hysteria with pessimism. In recent months this has been a failing of many progressives who seemed to hear the crack of doom in every unfavorable turn of events. I say this because the close of the Moscow conference, generally dismaying and unproductive as it was, does not mean that the world is on the precipice of disaster. On the contrary, the Moscow meeting in my opinion is reflective of the great strength of world democracy and the Soviet state in particular. General Marshall went abroad with a bushelful of tricky schemes, with the good wishes and mad words of the Russophobes, with the confidence that the American big money was irresistible. The threats and the Truman-Vandenberg Doctrine have not prevailed. Quite clearly the doctrine, although easily understood by certain Greeks and Turks, even by certain Frenchmen who have adopted the name of De Gaulle, is so much wasted paper in Moscow. If the Russians had been weak, if the entire democratic camp were weak, Marshall might have been able to pierce them like a knife pierces butter. But nothing of the kind happened.

We have in the outcome of the Moscow conference the first big, illuminating failure of the Truman-Vandenberg Doctrine. It is a failure because it succeeded only in creating deadlock on the major issues of the German settlement. As between the Potsdam Doctrine and Mr. Truman's there could be no other choice for the Russians but to choose the former. This was the choice which General Marshall tacitly presented them and it is the main reason the meeting closed without results on key issues. It was impossible for the American delegation to operate on a government policy calling for aggrandizement in Turkey and Greece and to act differently on matters concerning Germany. It is impossible to tell the world from one corner of your mouth that the Soviets and the new people's democracies must be ringed with steel and from the other corner to pretend to want to keep the Germans from ever again breaking out of bounds. It is impossible to violate tri-allied cooperation, the basis of Potsdam, in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and to pretend to cooperation in central Europe. The split personality finds its best environment in institutions for the mentally sick. It is out of place at international conferences.

In point of fact, however, the Americans were far from schizophrenic. They tried hard to apply the Truman-Vandenberg Doctrine to Germany. If we take the fundamental issue of reparations, we can see how their approach squared with the outlook inherent in the doctrine. The Russians were reasonable. They wanted ten billions in reparations based on signed agreements made with Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at Yalta and Potsdam. Moreover, they wanted it not all at once but spread over a period of twenty years. Such a program, rooted in increased German production, completely denazified and demilitarized, would not relieve the Germans of hardship, but it would be possible for them to live and to pay for a small part of the human and physical destruction they inflicted. But the American delegation answered with a resounding "no." And behind that "no" is the unchallengeable fact that it is bipartisan policy to retard Russia's economic recovery, to reduce her, if possible, to the status of a second or third-rate power. If that is not Washington policy its makers are hard put to explain why they give German economic recovery priority over Russian. If that is not American policy how can we explain the State Department's anxiety over having to spend millions of dollars in western Germany while gleefully throwing money, like playboys on a wild spree, down the Turkish and Greek drains?

IT IS not the money that worries the striped-pants brigade. What worries them is who gets it. It is the fear, too, that the Soviets have a bottomless market capable of absorbing any amount of reparations without worry that the reparations will compete with Soviet industries. The American imperialists dread the competition of German exports with their own. They seek a type of reparations which will place German industry, with its monopolies and cartels, under their control, thereby determining the economic development of western Europe at the minimum. For that a political superstructure is needed to atomize Germany into federal fragments and to maintain in power within these fragments the whole kit and caboodle of the Vatican's Bavarian disciples, the German counterparts of the Greek Maximos' and Tsaldaris', the Polish Anders'. The scum of Europe is attracted to this plan like moths to a flame. This is the Truman-Vandenberg Doctrine in its continental dimensions.

It is doomed to failure for the same reason that its introductory phases failed of accomplishment in Moscow. General Marshall may believe, as he implied in his post-conference statement, that the passage of time may make the opponents of his German projects more reasonable and cause them to agree to dig their own graves later in November when the foreign ministers meet again. But the instinct driving toward life and growth is too strong to sustain his hopes. Actually, by the coming November the situation may well be reversed and it is the State Department that may have to do the unbending. Soviet internal "weakness," on which the general counts heavily, is a mirage. It is American weakness with which the policy makers will have to contend soon or late. Soviet economy is in an upward swing; the American shows signs of falling and deteriorating. Nor can the general count on building a Western bloc *a la* Dulles to make his projects any more successful. Any such potential bloc is ridden with strife as a glance at the current meeting on international trade in Geneva quickly proves.

The British imperialist interest in this bloc is to use it both against the Americans and the Russians; De Gaulle's interest in it is to use it against the British and the Soviets; and the American interest is to use it against Europe itself and against its major wartime allies. Out of this frenzy of conflicting purposes there can come nothing but greater bankruptcy for imperialism and a strengthening of the people's forces. They will know how to use this dissidence in their own democratic interests.

The failure of the Moscow conference heralds only a greater and more relentless struggle against the doctrine that made it fail.

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THE DEAD IN THE SQUARE

by PABLO NERUDA

Translated by Robert Brittain

On January 28, 1946, a mass meeting of the General Confederation of Workers of Chile was held in the Plaza Bulnes in Santiago. It was attacked without warning by the police. Five workers were killed and many wounded. It is this event which Pablo Neruda commemorates in his great poem.

Illustrations by Jose Venturelli

I.

I do not come to weep here where they fell.
I come to speak to you who are still living;
I address my words to you, and to myself.

Others have died before. Remember? Yes, you remember
others like these, like you, with the same surnames.

In rainy Lonquimay, in San Gregorio,
in barren Ranquil, scored by the spendthrift wind,
in Iquique choked and half-buried by drifting sand,
along the edge of the sea and the edge of the desert,

following the smoke line and the rain line,
from the high pampas down to the archipelagos,
other men have been murdered,
others with names like Antonio, like your name,
fishermen, blacksmiths, people with jobs like yours:

bone and breed of Chile: faces
scarred by wind-lash, gaunt
as the pampas, wearing
the signature of pain.

II.

All along the ramparts of our fatherland,
bright at the edge of the blank glass-glitter of snow,
hidden behind the maze of the green-branched river,
under the nitrate, under the fuse of the bursting seed,
I found thick-strewn the drops of my people's blood.
And each drop burned like fire.

III.

Up to that time the blood had been always hidden under the
roots, always washed off and forgotten;
(it was so far away) the rain from the South had soaked it
into the earth
(it was so long ago), or the nitre had eaten it up when it
fell on the pampas.
And the death of the people was as it always had been:
as if it were only stones falling
on stony ground, water spilled into water.
From North to South, wherever the dead
were burned or ground to bits,
they were buried in utter darkness;
or piled up in a dense pyramid

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they were burned in the dead of night and in silence
and their ashes flung to the sea.
No one knows where they are: they have no tomb:
the deep roots of the nation have entangled
their martyred fingers, their exploded hearts.
O laughter of Chile, steadfast soul of the pampas,
voices out of the silence: no man living knows
where your murderers hid you from memory.
But on that day when the nation is resurrected
you will leap from the earth to recover your lost blood.

IV.

This crime took place right in the open Square.
Not in a forest was the innocent blood spilled,
not in the thirsty concealing sand of the pampas.
No one made any attempt to cover it up.
This crime was done in the very heart of the country.

V.

Once I was in the nitre beds with the unknown heroes
who dig that powdery fertilizing snow
from the hard crust of our planet;
I was there with those men at the time of the great strike;
I remember the proud hard clasp of their earthy hands.
They said to me, "Look, brother,
look how we live
here in Humberstone, here in Mapocho,
in Ricaventura, in Paloma,
in Pan de Azucar, in Piojillo."
They let me gnaw at the miserable roots
that give them all the nourishment they get;
they showed me the packed earth that is floor for their houses,
the heat, the dirt, the bedbugs,
and the endless solitude that is their life.
And I saw the diggers sweating at their work
and how they leave the full print of their hands
pressed in the wooden handles of their picks.

And I heard a voice welling up
from the dense base of the pyramid
as if the womb of hell had cried aloud,
and there lurched forth a creature with no face,
a foetus like a mask all splattered over
with sweat and blood and dirt.
And that nameless thing cried to me, saying, "Wherever
you go, tell of the torment endured
by those on the bottom, O my brother,
tell of your brother, whose whole life
is lived on the rim of hell."

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VI.

People, here you decided to lend a hand
to the bowed workers of the pampas; you answered them;
you called them, man, woman, and child,
one year ago, to this Square.

And here your blood gushed forth.
In the very center of the country it was spilled,
in front of the Palace, right in the middle of the street
for all the world to see.
And no one could mop it up:
your red stains remained there
like stars, fixed and implacable.

It was when one Chilean hand after another
was stretching out its fingers toward the pampas,
and your words came from the heart, speaking unity;
people, it was when you were marching in your own Square,
singing the old songs full of tears and hope and sorrow
that the hand of the hangman drenched the Square with
your blood.

VII.

This is the way the flag of our country was made:
out of the rags of their sorrow the people stitched it;
they embroidered it with the shining thread of love;

they cut from their shirts, or perhaps from a fold of the sky,
that patch of blue to hold the star of their country,
and with eager hands they pinned it there like a jewel.

Drop by drop it is turning to fiery red.

VIII.

This afternoon I call to them one by one.
One by one, come back to our memory
this afternoon in this Square.

Manuel Antonio Lopez,
faithful comrade;

Lisboa Calderon,
though others betrayed you,
we shall march on in your path.

Alejandro Gutierrez,
the banner that fell beside you
is rising all over your land;

Cesar Tapia,
your heart is alive in these banners,
I hear it beating, beating in the breeze on the Square;
Filomeno Chavez,

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I never shook your hand, but your hand is here:
not even death can stiffen a clean hand.

Ramona Parra, beautiful
as a new star in our sky,
Ramona Parra, delicate heroine,
flower stained with blood, dear young Ramona,
girl with the heart of steel, golden-haired fighter,
by your name, Ramona Parra, we swear to continue the fight
until your wasted blood flowers in freedom.

IX.

Those who came to this Square with loaded rifles,
those who came with orders to kill without mercy,
found here only a crowd of people singing—
a crowd made into a people by duty and love

and a thin girl suddenly fell clutching her banner;
a youth spun round coughing through the wound in his side;
in the shock of that silence the people stared at them falling
and slowly the wave of their sorrow lifted and froze into cold fury.

Afterward they dipped their banners into the blood
and held them up before the faces of the assassins.

X.

In the name of these our dead
I demand punishment.

For those who spattered our fatherland with blood
I demand punishment.

For him by whose command this crime was done
I demand punishment.

For the traitor who clambered to power over these bodies
I demand punishment.

For those forgiving ones who excused this crime
I demand punishment.

I do not want to shake hands all around and forget;
I do not want to touch their blood-stained hands;
I want punishment.

I do not want them sent off somewhere as ambassadors
nor covered up here at home until it blows over.

I want to see them judged,
here, in the open air, in this very spot.

I want to see them punished.

XI.

I must speak to those dead now as if they were here.
Brothers: it will go on,
our fight will go on in the land,
in the factories, in the farms,
in the streets the fight will go on,
in the nitre-pits, in the pampas.
In the craters of copper, glowing with green and red,
in the dank caves where coal-seams gleam through the dusk,
the battle-lines will be drawn.

And in our hearts these banners,
the witnesses of your death,
will multiply themselves until they flutter
thick as the thrusting leaves of inexhaustible spring.

XII.

Footsteps shuffling a thousand years in this Square
will not rub off the trace of your blood from these stones;
though the babble of countless voices cross this quietness
that bell will echo, tolling the hour of your death;
though rain may rot these walls to their foundations
it will not quench the blaze of your martyred names
nor the dead hand of a thousand nights of oppression
stifle your living hope for that destined day
that we throughout the world, so many of us,
are yearning toward; the final day of suffering,
the day of justice won through bitter struggle;
and you, O fallen brothers, out of the silence
your voices will rise in the mighty shout of freedom
when the hope of the people flames into paeans of joy.

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KING HENRY IS DEAD — AND SO IS UNCLE TOM

Ford Local 600, UAW-CIO, symbolizes the unity of labor and the Negro people's fight for freedom.

By A. W. BERRY

THE passing of Henry Ford recalls the time when the auto king was the Big White Father to Detroit Negroes. More Negroes worked at Ford's Rouge plant than were employed in all the other Detroit plants put together. And every job was a political plum. Jobs in Ford's plants were handled by Negro ministers, who gave the applicants, fresh from the rural South, "letters of introduction." Applicants were expected to respond to these favors by voting the straight Republican ticket. But Ford was too shrewd to depend on good will alone; he backed up the expected "gratitude" with plenty of leg work by his Service Department.

The 10,000 Negro workers were carefully culled and policed by Ford's private dicks. Operating under the trained supervision of Harry Bennett, these industrial gumshoes reported on off-duty activities of Negro newcomers. And, to make the pose as friend-of-the-Negro stick, Negro operatives were hired who reported to Negro service men who bore the titles "personnel assistants." Most notorious among these "assistants" were Donald Marshall, an old Ford worker who had "worked up from the ranks," and Willis Ward, a former star athlete and University of Michigan footballer. Ward and Marshall were simultaneously GOP leaders in Detroit's Negro ghetto. After Roosevelt was reelected in 1936, an election in which the Negroes had shown a preference for Democratic candidates, Ford's Republican "personnel" men complained in speeches that the Negroes were biting the hand that gave them jobs.

As the Roosevelt era wore on, and the Negro people in Detroit, as throughout the country, rallied to the New Deal, the Negro ministers had to change their political tune. It was true that Ford was handing out jobs, but it was also true that it was not possible to hold New Deal voters with GOP sermons.

IT WAS at about this time that Ford began his race with the union. In 1937 the United Auto Workers began its organizing drive. In a quick campaign, plant after plant was organized and there was growing support for unions in the Negro community. Ford stepped up his hiring of Negroes in the hope that he could play on the backward prejudices of the Southern whites and Negroes by throwing them into competition with each other. For a while the tactic worked. Ford was the last of the auto dynasties to unfurl the surrender flag to the advancing unionists.

In the struggle he had been strong enough to close all Detroit pulpits to no less a figure than Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University in Washington. Dr. Johnson had made the "mistake" of telling an audience in one of his Detroit speeches that it was all right to join unions.

It was widely circulated that only in the Ford plants did Negro workers man assembly lines. It was known that in other plants no Negroes worked in production. (This continued to be true until the war.) Ford had even advanced a handful of Negroes to the tool and die departments. This was a strong selling point—even though almost all Negroes worked in the foundries—and Ford played it for all it was worth against the union's organizing drive. But it lost out in the end.

Of the 12,000 Negroes employed at the beginning of the strike in 1941 all but 2,000 went out on the picket line. These 2,000 were workers whom Ford agents had "imported" as new workers for just the purpose. Most of the 10,000 Negroes on the line were from the foundry. They did the hard and dirty work, had good muscles and were agile enough to fend off the attacks of the scabs and goons. The foundry was solid. Ford's stronghold, the instrument through which he manipulated Republican politics in the Negro community, had slipped out of his grasp.

BUT this was not an automatic process which began with the union drive, nor did it begin with the not-too-well-planned walk-out in 1941. This process of Negro labor militancy had begun in Ford's way back in the early Thirties. There were Negroes among the Hunger Marchers who paraded to the Rouge gates in March, 1932. And among the banners carried by the marchers were some calling for the freedom of the Scottsboro Boys. James Ashford, a young Negro among the marchers, was cut down by a machine-gun bullet in his leg. Later he became a leader of the Young Communist League in New York. He died in 1937, after having helped pull together a corps of youth to aid in the CIO organizing drive.

Inside the plant—and in the foundry where most of the Negro workers were—the underground against Ford was taking shape. Men like Nelson Davis, a hefty ex-farmer from the South, were rallying the Negro workers to union and equality. Davis, a twenty-year man at the plant, remembers when it was dangerous to one's life to talk union, to join a union or to read a workers' paper. Despite this the foundry workers joined the old Automobile Workers Industrial Union; they read the union paper and the *Daily Worker*. Union meetings were held clandestinely. Suspected union "agitators" and organizers had to be especially alert, had to move with protection at all times. Ford's "friendship" for the Negro was buttressed with baseball bats, blackjacks and bullets. He was taking no chances on becoming unwanted by his workers. He valued the Negroes' friendship so highly that goons with knives mounted on barrel staves were sent on a drunken foray into the picketlines at the height of the strike.

But the goons were disarmed and the line held. Ford's feudal, patronizing friendship gave way to the union

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contract and the closed shop. The foundry and the Negro workers became the stronghold of progressivism. They had voted for the New Deal; now they had utilized its program for winning a measure of industrial democracy.

Out of that victory over industrial feudalism came new forces and new techniques. The union "flying squad" with a goodly number of its personnel recruited from the foundry has brought unionism to many small sweatshops. When a small group of Negro women were struggling with a Detroit food operator last year, and when an AFL union sought to victimize them, the Ford flying squad rode to the rescue —and the women won. Jim Crow is also a target of the flying squad, which joined with American Youth for Democracy in its campaign to break Jim Crow in the downtown Barlum Hotel—and won.

MORE than any other institution Ford Local 600, UAW-CIO, has established as a living reality the link between the labor movement and

(*Continued on page* 31)

EISLER: *"I shall have my day..."*

The following statement, ignored almost completely by the press, was made by Gerhart Eisler last week in Washington where he was arraigned in Federal Court on technical charges of "contempt" of Congress and "perjury":

I PLEADED not guilty and I am not guilty. What I have said on every occasion month after month I have to repeat:

I am not an atom-bomb spy, nor a spy of a lower species; I am not a foreign agent, not the "boss" of all the Reds in this or any other country and I am not a dangerous enemy alien. I never intended to overthrow the American government and I never harmed the American people. I am a German Communist, a political exile who wanted to go to Mexico, and is fighting for the right to go home in peace.

My release on bail after ten weeks of imprisonment is a *confession of guilt* of the Department of Justice which arrested me under the ridiculous, flimsy pretext of being a "dangerous enemy alien." My release on bail debunks all the wild stories about me told by rats, turncoats and their fixers. My release on bail shames, or should shame if that were possible, the yellow press, the smart story-tellers, the sensation-mongers and the slanderers.

My release on bail and even the indictments against me have also unmasked the Un-American Activities Committee. Whoever heard of releasing an atom-bomb spy, a foreign agent, an overthrower of the government and a dangerous enemy agent all in one for $20,000? I am not indicted for the "overthrow of the government," for spying, for being a foreign agent. The Justice Department did not dare, even in this season of insane Red-hunting, to indict me on such counts.

Every word in the statement which I prepared to give under oath before the Un-American Activities Committee has been proven true.

A few words in regard to the contempt indictment. Although according to international agreements I was, having been arrested as an enemy alien, *entitled to refuse to be sworn in*, I didn't refuse to testify under oath. All I wanted was to make a three-minute protest against my unlawful arrest. I demanded nothing but three minutes of freedom of speech.

As for the new indictment for "perjury," I shall have my day in court, in which I intend to tell the jury of my struggle against German fascism and of my fight for the right to go home. For instance, if there still exist German records of the airfield of Hamburg, it will be found that a man with an American passport with my photo landed there by plane in the year 1935. I was this man. And in great respect I take my hat off to the American gentleman who made this possible for me.

And in great respect I take my hat off to American Communists and other decent Americans who helped me individually in the years between 1934 and 1936 to get to the underground fighters in Germany money, mimeograph machines, typewriters and material for building illegal radio stations.

And in great respect I take my hat off to those brave Americans who went as seamen to Hitler Germany to help in our desperate struggle against the Hitler regime.

I am, by the way, sure that if the American people and their government had fully recognized at that time—as we German Communists did—that Hitler meant war, the honest German underground fighters would have got help not only from American Communists but also from the American authorities, with or without "technical violations." This is no pure speculation, as all events between 1942 and 1945 proved.

If a petty-minded spirit wants to punish someone, let it be me and only me. May I have the privilege of paying back a little for what decent Americans did for German Communists?

But if another spirit prevails—a spirit worthy of such a great nation as the United States and its great democratic and revolutionary traditions—my indictments will be quashed and I will be allowed to go home to Germany in peace. And Germany will have one additional honest anti-fascist who will not spare his strength in the task of building a peaceful, democratic, progressive Germany.

Should I, however, be sentenced to twenty-five years in prison, as a certain kind of optimistic press hopes, I shall watch with pleasure from such a prison how American reaction goes to hell as German fascism did.

GERHART EISLER.

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THE CASE OF CAPTAIN REITER

He is an American, an outstanding war-hero, a Communist. Now he is on trial in the American Legion. Here are the facts—you be the judge.

By LAWRENCE EMERY

After capturing the town of Olk in Germany in a flurry of street fighting they pushed beyond to the top of a wooded ridge but they were pounded off when the Germans concentrated all their artillery on it. It was very unhealthy up there but when First Lieutenant Sidney Reiter learned that several wounded had been left behind he formed a patrol and led it back up and brought out some of the casualties. It was so bad he wouldn't let the same men go back a second time but formed another patrol of volunteers. He was very scared himself but he personally led the way to the top again, and they brought out all the wounded. The Army said it was "a brilliant example of courage and leadership in the face of extreme danger" and gave him a Bronze Star. It didn't occur to any of the wounded at the time to ask Lt. Reiter what his politics were. . . .

In the vicinity of Speicher, Company F ran into bad trouble and all its officers were killed or wounded in a sudden German counterattack which cracked the American lines. The situation was officially described as "disastrously grave" and it looked like the whole battalion would be smashed up. They pulled Lt. Reiter out of Company E and sent him in to take command of battered Company F. It was a tough spot, but the lieutenant did all right. They gave him an oak leaf cluster to wear on his Bronze Star and a battlefield promotion to the rank of captain. "He quickly grasped the complete situation," his citation said, "and led the unit in a victorious assault against the enemy, repulsing an attack that had threatened the entire battalion. His cunning leadership, fearlessness and excellent application of strategy reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States." Nobody at the time thought to ask him how he voted.

When they gave him a Purple Heart for a wound received in that action they didn't think his political views were pertinent to the matter.

His commanding officer recommended his promotion because "by taking command of a rifle company during active combat, Lt. Reiter showed exceptional leadership and ability to command a rifle company. This is not the first time this officer has shown these qualities. As executive officer of Co. E he showed exceptional leadership qualities and ability as a combat commander." The colonel at the time didn't seem concerned with his lieutenant's politics. . . .

They were crossing a lake once without benefit of a bridge and when an enlisted man burdened with a full pack fell in it looked for a time as though he was a goner. But Capt. Reiter at considerable risk to himself saved him. The rescued man at the time didn't think to ask the captain his ideas about the social ownership of the means of production. Neither did the colonel, who witnessed the deed. The colonel just went ahead and saw to it that the captain got the Soldier's Medal, which is awarded for bravery apart from enemy action.

When hostilities ended they found that Capt. Reiter had administrative abilities too, and Military Government made him a Welfare Officer and put him in top control of a Bavarian region comprising a million persons, all of them badly in need of welfare. He held that position until he came home.

Captain Reiter applied for membership in the Gen. Duffy Post of the American Legion, with headquarters at 23rd St. and Second Ave. in New York City, in April, 1946, the same month he was separated from the Army. Post Commander Louis J. Naftalison looked at the honorable discharge with its resounding record of heroism and achievement, and noted the impressive physical facts of the man —200 pounds solidly packed into a five-foot, ten-inch frame and a lusty exuberance that is catching—and was very pleased to recommend him for acceptance.

Sidney Reiter is a happy extrovert who does everything with a bounding enthusiasm and a boyish gusto which usually carries everybody along with him and he plunged into post activities with the same energy with which he fought half-way across Germany. He introduced a lot of resolutions and every one of them was adopted. Naftalison supported every action Reiter proposed and backed him on every issue he introduced. He appointed Reiter chairman of the post housing committee, and the post elected him its delegate to the Legion's city-wide Operation Housing. Naftalison was proud of his new member; he even took the floor to commend him for his work.

On election day eve last year Mr. Naftalison was walking down Second Ave. near the post headquarters and became exceedingly distressed when he found his promising new member on the street corner selling the special election issue of the *Daily Worker*. Mr. Naftalison is a lawyer by profession, has an obscure World War I record, holds a civil service position as chief referee of the Unemployment Insurance Board and has an anti-Communist complex. Reiter cheerfully sold him a copy of the paper.

When Reiter next appeared at a post meeting Mr. Naftalison refused to accept his dues. The matter was referred to the Legion Judge Advocate who suggested that expulsion proceedings be instituted. A week later Mr. Naftalison appeared with a document which, when

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stripped of its verbose legalisms, charged that because Reiter was a Communist he was automatically guilty of disloyalty, dishonesty, neglect of duty and conduct unbecoming a Legionnaire. "The Gen. Duffy Post," he shrilled to the press, "welcomes the opportunity to tell the world that no Communist can crawl in on his war record. . . ." It was thoroughly evident to Mr. Naftalison that:

Sidney Reiter had enlisted in the Army early in 1942, had got himself selected for training as an anti-aircraft officer, had made excellent marks and served with distinction as an instructor, had volunteered for a transfer to the infantry to get into combat and had got himself wounded and decorated for gallantry and heroism in action, all for the sole purpose of eventually worming his way into the Gen. Duffy Post to cause acute embarrassment to Mr. Naftalison and the reactionary king-makers of the American Legion. It is a good thing that Reiter, for all his ebullience, is a disciplined man or he might have been tempted to settle Mr. Naftalison's charges on the spot.

Instead he got himself a lawyer, prepared a defense and is ready to fight the case all the way up to the Supreme Court of the United States to establish once and for all the right of a member of the American Communist Party to belong to the American Legion and to exercise his full rights as an American citizen to preserve and extend the principles of American democracy and freedom.

REITER has been a Communist since 1938; he takes his Americanism seriously and since his student days he has been up front fighting for it.

He was born in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn in 1915 and at a very early age got a wonderful sense of the freedom possible in the United States. As a kid he saw a performance of *Aida* at the old Roebling Theater and it was a stupendous production with real live horses, great beasts which had been borrowed for the occasion from the stables of a brewery. They were untrained and undisciplined actors and when one of them committed a public nuisance the small boy thought, "What a wonderful country this is; they even let horses do it right on the stage."

When Sid was sixteen or seventeen he used to hang around the fringes of street-corner meetings and he was very impressed once when James Ford was announced as a speaker but didn't appear on time. When he did arrive he explained his lateness by announcing that he had just been freed from arrest and Sid said to himself, "These Communists must have a lot of guts. . . ."

The bottom was still falling out of things from the 1929 crash and Sid went to work after school as an errand boy for a jewelry dealer. He picked up a few Communist pamphlets to read but his father frowned on them and Sid had little privacy at home so he didn't do much reading at that time but just went ahead figuring things out for himself.

He graduated from high school in 1933 and got a job as a shipping clerk for a furrier and enrolled in the City College School of Business Evening Session. From then until he took a degree in 1941 he worked all day and went to school at night with the ambition of becoming a teacher. When Hitler came to power he was aroused at the anti-Semitic outrages that followed and when the war in Spain broke out his sympathies were with the Loyalists and a slogan of the League Against War and Fascism stuck in his head: Bombs on Madrid mean bombs on Paris and London and New York.

He was always energetic. When he did anything he did it with a full-bodied uninhibited enthusiasm that affected everybody around him. He joined the American League Against War and Fascism, joined the American Student Union and became active in CCNY's Student Council, which elected him vice-president in charge of extra-curricular activities and later president. When the Rapp-Coudert Committee launched its attack on academic freedom Reiter led a student campaign in support of the ousted teachers and was threatened with expulsion. But he had the backing of the entire student body and the threat was withdrawn.

He was learning a lot and learning it fast.

At college he had been attending meetings of the Marxist Study Club and in 1938 he joined the Young Communist League. When he got out of school in 1941 he became chairman of the grievance committee of his union, the State, County and Municipal Workers, then vice-president of Local 45; later he took over the duties of president. He worked for the State Insurance Fund until he enlisted in the Army in 1942.

In 1938 he met Rose, who was

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cashier of the sandwich shop where he ate. She was also a student at City College. In 1941 they got married. When Sid joined the Army Rose was chief bookkeeper for her firm, but she gave up that position and took a war job in the Todd shipyards in Brooklyn, where she worked as a shipfitter until V-J Day.

AMERICANS? Sid and Rose both get pretty angry when ambitious little lawyers challenge their patriotism. They've invested a lot of sweat and not a little blood to keep their country free, and they'll keep working at it.

Whatever Naftalison and Legion officials say about Reiter, the officers of his old outfit are with him. At a recent reunion he was nominated for vice-president of the association but he declined. His old regimental intelligence officer, Major Alex M. Clark, now a municipal court judge in Indianapolis, sent him a wire when he learned of the Legion case: "Can see no reason for your expulsion in view of the fine services you've rendered your country in combat with the 304th."

Sid Reiter likes to laugh. Three of his current enthusiasms are bridge, bowling, and driving an old Ford. His bridge game is inexpert but he plays with huge delight. His bowling is erratic but he goes at the game with extravagant abandon, throwing every ounce of his 200 pounds into it; 135 is about his best score but he loves it. He drives his old car with the same kind of dashing and happy impetuousness.

But sometimes he doesn't laugh. He doesn't laugh when he remembers his first attack in battle. . . . They were across the Nims River, and somewhere not far ahead was the Siegfried Line. Directly before them was an open clearing 400 yards wide and on the other side of the clearing was a forest. The enemy was in the forest. They didn't have time to wait for dark but made a daylight attack. Of the two platoons that went across first, one was practically wiped out. The wounded began to crawl back to their own lines. German snipers picked them off, one by one, deliberately and carefully and very, very accurately. That was their big mistake. They just made the Americans fighting mad. From that point on they didn't stop. . . .

Reiter remembers that action sometimes when he considers the activities of the Un-American Committee and certain Legion officials.

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review and comment

THE SECRET LIFE OF L. BUDENZ

Writing in the spirit of Ananias—and J. Edgar Hoover—a sanctimonious fink peddles his wares.

By SENDER GARLIN

THIS IS MY STORY, *by Louis Francis Budenz. Whittlesey House.* $3.

HITLER'S residuary legatees are busy. Their voices may be heard in Congress, on the radio, in the press. The American imperialists, seeking to stifle democratic movements everywhere, in order to establish world mastery, know that the conquest of the human mind is a vital part of their war strategy. It is this political climate that makes possible the publication of the "revelations" of one who in 1945 absconded from Communist circles in order to make a well-timed and well-publicized entry into the Catholic Church. If ever there was a time for such political pornography, it is the present.

It is as difficult to "refute" Budenz's collections of half-truths, misstatements, libels, slanders and vilifications as it is to catch a greased pig. How, for instance, was one to refute one of Budenz's predecessors—Jan Valtin—when the latter told how the seventy-four-year-old Romain Rolland was offered the choice of "girl companions" by an alleged Moscow agent? Can such miserable falsehoods be refuted by documentary evidence?

One thing is quite obvious about Budenz's chronicle: he prepared himself for his task by a most conscientious reading of all previous confessions by kindred spirits, including Victor Serge, Walter Krivitsky, Jan Valtin, Alexander Barmine, Eugene Lyons, Isaac Don Levine, Ben Gitlow and all the others who have made a career of describing the Communist movement "from the inside."

Budenz has lots of stuff about "secret agents." I read about it before in concoctions by Kravchenko and his friends. It's the kind of stuff that's easy to write. You don't have to prove a thing. You assert it loudly, violently, "colorfully," and the more luridly fictitious your yarn is, the more impressed are the reviewers. For these gentlemen of the literary stock-exchange who are so stern in appraising the historical truth of a novel, say, by Howard Fast when he deals with John Peter Altgeld, are suckers for Budenz's stuff.

Budenz proclaims that he wrote his book "in humility." A few examples: He writes that "some people began to call me 'the best known man in the labor movement.' " He suggests that a letter he wrote for the Republican New York *Sun* was somehow responsible for the popular front policy enunciated by Georgi Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. To build up his authority as a "Communist leader" who participated in the highest councils of the organization, he tells of alleged conversations in which he allegedly participated. And always, of course, he played a stellar role. The picture he presents of himself is one of master-organizer, theoretician, editor, silver-tongued orator, and giant battler for human freedom. To those, who like myself, had the melancholy privilege of working with Budenz, these self-serving declarations can only bring wry smiles. All told, it suggests the day-dream of James Thurber's classic, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. It must be said for Mr. Mitty, however, that *his* dreams were harmless.

It would be a mistake to think that Budenz has given himself this terrific build-up merely for the purpose of propping a sagging ego. It is the regulation formula of the informer seeking to impress his clients with his impressive "background," his extensive "connections," and his ability to play the fingerman against militants in the labor movement. That Budenz has had a measure of success in this business has already been amply demonstrated: he is permanent star witness for the Un-American Committee, and announces that he is working on another book which "will evaluate the Reds in the labor movement."

Budenz gaily acknowledges that for a number of years after his first meeting with Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen he felt like an "onlooker" even though posing as a devoted Communist. "At the *Daily Worker*," he recalls, "I criticized copy, made proposals and revisions on pieces to back the line—and fingered a rosary in my pocket as I did so."

Yet, Budenz's principal *leitmotif* is the "duplicity" of the Communists!

Throughout the narrative, too, one encounters the phrase, "I made notes at the time," and one is impelled to ask, for whom?

But the answer is no longer a mystery. Whether Louis Budenz entered the Communist movement ten years ago for the purpose of ultimately betraying it, only Budenz and Monsignor Sheen can say. But that his conduct while he was ostensibly a Communist (according to his own testimony) savored of the stoolpigeon is beyond question.

The description of his "conversion" to Catholicism is as phony as the rest of his story. It is full of contradictions and retroactive explanations. This conversion—if indeed it was that—was not a religious one. If he is a convert, then so was Jacques Doriot who deserted the French working-class movement to do the dirty work of the fascists who sought to destroy France.

The spectacle of Budenz collecting

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wages from the *Daily Worker*—cash made available frequently through contributions of loyal Party members—while his real sympathies lay elsewhere, is certainly not one that suggests either St. Augustine or St. Francis of Assisi. Duplicity is a mild word.

One thing must be said for Budenz: he is consistent. He lies on virtually every page. He lies when he says that the Communist Party demands a religious test for membership. He lies when he says that "when a member takes up a new post, he must file a complete new biography" giving his entire history "and a list of his relatives." Budenz's imagination is so inflamed for the purposes of his book that he doctors up speeches made by former colleagues. He quotes from alleged talks before the *Daily Worker* staff by James S. Allen and Milton Howard, for instance. I happened to be present on both occasions. Although he is lavish in the use of quotation marks, Budenz attributes remarks to Allen and Howard which do not bear the slightest resemblance to what these men actually said. In the same category are Budenz's malicious yarns about Art Shields, a veteran labor journalist of sterling character. Budenz uses another device, seemingly more important: he lifts sentences from Party documents and puts them in the form of statements made "confidentially" to him by "highly-placed Communist leaders."

Monsignor Sheen's agent says that American Communists are imprisoned in a "Red straitjacket." What impels the members of the Communist Party to submit to such a cruel fate? Do they celebrate their thralldom by fulfilling manifold assignments involving hard and detailed work, and by contributing from their hard-earned wages to fund drives to fight the Budenzes and their kind?

Budenz's libels are not even original. Some have been plagiarized from Gerald L. K. Smith. He asserts, for instance, that in the Communist Party, "to have been born in Minsk, Dvinsk or Pinsk was much more valued than birth in Minneapolis, Detroit or Pittsburgh."

This crude bit of anti-Semitism aside for the moment, the facts in Budenz's own career would prove him a liar. It was Earl Browder's preoccupation with the *form* rather than the substance of an American party that made possible Budenz's elevation to the National Committee a few short months after he joined the organization.

Budenz's dedication of his book to the Virgin Mary is disingenuous. A more appropriate dedication would be to J. Edgar Hoover, the National Association of Manufacturers and Columbians, Inc.

Swig From an Old Bottle

PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST, *by Irwin Edman. Viking.* $3.

MANY books on speculative philosophy are being written these days with the disintegration of the old social forms which appeared so stable and permanent only yesterday. With so many foundations crumbling, some people who are gloomy or uneasy seek spiritual reassurance and a sense of security in the shades and varieties of old speculative idealist philosophy. There is a revival of faith in the outdated world-views of pre-scientific thinkers. New variations of their errors, unavoidable for their time, are now being presented as true and original philosophies. Those who want to preserve the old established order of things seek strength and solace in these old ideas.

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Professor Irwin Edman's new book *Philosopher's Quest* is part of this tradition of academic speculation. It has received enthusiastic reviews because it is written with a cloudy charm and a style lightened with anecdotes and bull-session talks which refresh cherished memories of youthful, carefree college days.

Professor Edman is a subtle writer who rarely commits himself on any vital question. One of his chapters contains an account of a hypothetical Act of Congress outlawing all philosophy. The country almost goes to the dogs within ten years, and the philosophical Volstead Act is repealed just in time to avert a social debacle. Obviously philosophy is to Dr. Edman the cement of social existence. But when after a year of lectures his Columbia students ask for a philosophy by which to live he is not only noncommital but proud of the fact that his students "had found all these doctrines interesting and none of them conclusive. We had been making progress then."

It is not always easy to distinguish Dr. Edman's personal views from those of the characters who enliven the book. But one thing is clear. It is impossible, according to this otherwise elusive sage, to acquire a consistent, clear view of the world, a view that may be a guide to humanity in its aspirations and struggles for a better society.

There is a lot of seeking to fathom "the first and the last," to grasp the secret meaning of time and eternity, appearance and reality, infinity, the "mystery at the heart of things," Truth, God and Beauty. Dr. Edman's devotion to the ancient Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle and Plato, is little short of pious. But despite one paragraph of lip-service to the scientific view of the world, this gentle professor and all his characters have a deep distrust of science. One of his characters says, "Even the standards of empirical science were uncertain . . . and many scientists were saying that science itself could not tell the truth about reality." His entire book breathes and glories in the spirit of uncertainty, while gently chiding the extreme cynics and skeptics. When his students contend that they are quite certain that they really exist, he reminds them that all their alleged acts and thoughts before entering the classroom consist of pure memories—perhaps false; their future plans are mere expectations, acts of faith; at the mo-

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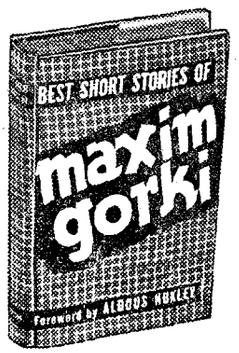

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Edited by Avrahm Yarmolinsky, in charge of Slavonic language books in the New York Public Library, and Baroness Moura Budberg, long associated with Gorki.

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ment, each is a "cluster of sensations." At the end of the session he muses: "These students are very young but already are full of age-old prejudices." The remark is revealing. For "age-old prejudices" is the standard idealist characterization for normal peoples' belief that they exist in a real objective world. Frank and consistent idealists consider all "claims" of science to be mere dogmatic and naive prejudices of infidel materialism. Edman operates on the Kantian borderline, accepting the unavoidable reality without surrendering the idealist "mystery at the heart of things," another name for the unknowable.

The average person, after attending Professor Edman's lectures or reading his books, may not take these fashionable doubts of the existence of the material world too seriously, but they do serve to open a path for the entrance of theology into science, to roll down the carpet for the reappearance of theism in the laboratory.

But the real purpose and/or effect of this mild liberal and impotent agnosticism is to be found in the following passage: "It was even more impossible to tell how much of science there was, or ever could be, in the so-called social sciences." Edman writes this as the opinion of a misunderstood philosopher, perhaps the author. Even then it is not explicit. The average academic philosopher's method is to discredit the science of social development and to deny the laws governing the progressive evolution of human society, through ridicule and skepticism, direct and indirect. While this does no harm to the established social order it dismisses as futile all aspirations and efforts to alter it.

Professor Edman is in part a disciple of John Dewey, and while he does not give vent to Dewey's bitter hatred of the Soviet Union he prods some of his mythical characters to apply his skepticism to the historically progressive nature of socialism. One of these tells a plain falsehood of which the unbiased author could not possibly be innocent for all his uncertainties. He says that in the USSR "only one philosophy, that according to Marx, [is] allowed to be taught." This is no simple unawareness of facts but either a bias contracted from "the great John Dewey" or a protective adaptation to prevailing prejudices. Professor Edman should be aware that the entire history of philosophy is taught in all the higher Soviet institutes of learning, and that the

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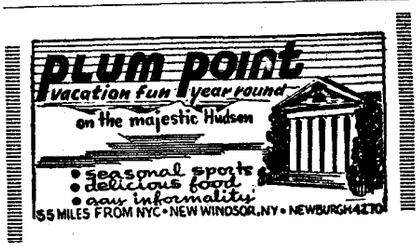
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works of all the great classical philosophers are used as texts in the study courses of those schools. This is only one of a number of unphilosophical cracks at Marx and Lenin, in contrast to numerous sympathetic or worshipful references to Kirkegaard, Schopenhauer and other creators of shallow, transient philosophies.

Here are not the personal views of a single individual but the substance of philosophy as taught in our higher institutions of learning. And the intellectual vision this philosophy stimulates is pretty well reflected in the general run of our press, our books, our movies and our radio.

RALPH BOWMAN.

Awakening

THE MAKING OF A SOUTHERNER, *by Katherine Du Pre Lumpkin. Viking. $3.*

THE fury of present-day American reaction tends to make us forget that this is indicative of weakness, not strength; of doubt, not certainty; of desperation, not confidence. The decay of our particular type of socio-economic order is clear—clear even to the ruling class, as its hysterical antics show. An inevitable concomitant of this impending collapse is the breaking away from a faith in the status quo by the more discerning members of that class who, in "normal" times, would be its ardent defenders.

Anyone having the slightest acquaintance with today's South knows that an increasing proportion of those who ordinarily would be the standard-bearers of its ethos—the scions of governors and legislators, of planters and businessmen, the present-day white Southern college generation — find themselves increasingly embarrassed by that ethos, uncomfortable, on the defensive, worried.

Miss Lumpkin's book represents an account of this process, and since such chronicles are still rare, her work is a useful one. She does not attempt to describe the present-day South as a whole, or even the white South, but rather seeks to show how she, a descendant of leading Southern politicians, planters and slaveholders, professional "Rebels," conscious preservers of semi-feudal values, leaders of the KKK—grew to doubt and finally to abandon the faith of her fathers.

The process is complicated and difficult. For as Miss Lumpkin now knows, the implanting of chauvinism

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within the minds of each succeeding white generation is a conscious, deliberate act, participated in by family, school, church, press and law. This is done for the purposes of helping to maintain the super-exploitation of the Negro masses and the impoverishment of the propertyless whites as well as providing America's vested interests with a solid core of reactionary support. And to all this the author was subjected—from "playing Ku Klux Klan" to participating in Confederate reunions, from her father's carefully organized family "debates" in which but one verdict was permissible, to precise instruction as to proper conduct within stations and trains.

Yet the break came. First, depression, insecurity, the discovery of the "other half" among the whites, the merciless beating of an "impudent" Negro cook by a parent, the suddenly-discovered dignity of the black worker. Then, with the original break-through, an increased tempo as lie after lie falls before the impact of reality and learning.

The description of the collapse of the reactionary edifice as experienced by one of its inmates is done convincingly, but very much less satisfactory is the meager account of what replaced it. Here one meets nebulous generalizations.

The book could be more accurately labelled "The Unmaking of a Bourbon." As such it has distinct value.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

RECORDS

SERGEI PROKOFIEFF'S Symphony Number 5 is one of the profound musical works of our time. It must be listened to until it becomes part of our musical thinking. Koussevitsky, leading the Boston Orchestra, does greater justice to the music than Rodzinski did. He keeps a steadier pulse, and allows the climaxes to come, as they easily do, out of the composer's own mastery of counterpoint and orchestral timber. Recording is first rate (Victor 1095).

Khachaturian's "Gayne" exhibits a different side of musical culture in the Soviet Union. A ballet dealing with life on an Armenian collective farm, it offers little to the student of composition, but is captivating music, combining Oriental themes with the vigorous heritage of the Tschaikowsky ballets. Efrem Kurtz conducts the New York Philharmonic with the proper feeling for the music (Columbia 664).

A masterpiece of conducting is Fritz Reiner's, with the Pittsburgh Symphony, of De Falla's ballet *El Amor Brujo*. Here the impressionism of the music doesn't drown out the folk rhythms, as it did in Stokowski's recent flabby job. Carol Brice sings the vocal parts (Columbia 633).

Bach is at his greatest in works like the cantata *Christ Lag in Todesbanden*. Here the classic analyst and the great popular artist are one, with the masterly architecture and polyphony given the immediacy of communication of a tone poem. Robert Shaw handles chorus and orchestra with vigor, clarity and good musicianship, if not the utmost adjustment to every mood of the music (Victor 1096). The Bach "Twelve Little Preludes" are slighter works, meant for instruction, but beautiful, and splendidly performed by Erno Balogh (Disc 771). The most charming, popular Handel may be found in the ballet "The Great Elopement," which Sir Thomas Beecham has put together out of airs

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and dances from Handel's forgotten operas. The music sometimes sounds almost Schubertian. Beecham conducts the London Philharmonic (Victor 1093).

If you like Beethoven to sound like the father of Chopin and Schumann, as his *Pathetique* Sonata does in most concert performances, you will like Arthur Rubinstein's sensuous and well-recorded version (Victor 1102). I prefer Serkin's more classic reading. The "Grand Fugue" written at the close of Beethoven's life and originally meant as the finale of the Quartet Op. 130 is far less approachable, and far greater music. In this music Beethoven seems to probe the very limits of harmony, and parts sound as novel today as works of Bartok and Schoenberg. The Kroll Quartet handles one of the most difficult tasks in quartet literature admirably, and the recording is exceptionally good (Musicraft 73).

S. FINKELSTEIN.

King Henry Is Dead

(*Continued from page* 21)

the Negro people's fight for freedom. From the foundry, with the hardest, dirtiest and heaviest work of any department in an auto plant, have come union and people's leaders. The present recording secretary of the union, William Johnson, comes from the foundry. The former recording secretary, now president of the foundry building (a post approximating an ordinary local's president) is Shelton Tappes. Tappes came from the foundry to assume local and national leadership in the progressive movement. Local 600 sparks the entire UAW on progressive issues.

For two years running now progressives have won the entire slate of local offices. With its more than 10,000 Negro members, its alert leadership and trip-hammer reaction to issues in every sphere, the local has won its place in the hearts of the Negro people.

Henry Ford could never buy from his workers and the people the affection and loyalty the union commands. This is a development of tremendous importance to the political and social health of America. And it is a comforting thought on this May Day, 1947, when the masters of lynch-law are uniting with the advocates of industrial peonage to push America back to Ford Rouge Plant, 1932.

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- **ROBERT THOMPSON** — *Chairman, N. Y. State Communist Party*
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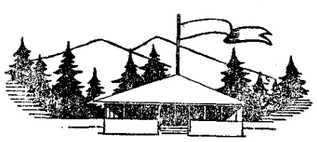

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